



County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

March 11, 2008

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisors:

PUBLIC LIBRARY DEPARTMENT: APPROVAL OF A LIBRARIAN EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM (3 VOTES)

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve the County Library to develop a "Librarian Education Reimbursement Program" including a strategic plan, general guidelines, application form, reimbursement agreement, and other documents necessary for the establishment of the program.
2. Approve the introduction of ordinance which governs tuition reimbursement to allow tuition reimbursement for part-time temporary employees of the Public Library Department.
3. Authorize the County Librarian to implement the program in 2008-09.

BACKGROUND

At the Board meeting held on June 19, 2007, Supervisor Burke stated that "the recruitment and retention of librarians is incontestably the most significant challenge facing our County Public Library Department. A number of factors contribute to this, including an aging workforce and the high cost of living in Southern California." On motion of Supervisor Burke, seconded by Supervisor Antonovich, unanimously carried, the Chief Executive Officer, in concert with the County Librarian, was instructed to determine the feasibility of developing a Librarian Education Reimbursement Program for part-time employees.

Board of Supervisors
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As many baby boomers are retiring, the County Library has an urgent need to retain its workforce with sufficient professional staffing in the future. While a tuition reimbursement program is available for full-time permanent employees as a career path, Library Aides and Pages, who work part-time and on an as-needed basis, are not eligible to apply for it. Many of these employees are college students. Although they have shown interest in obtaining a Masters degree in Library and Information Science (MLIS), they do not have the financial capacity to pursue the MLIS.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

The County Librarian is proposing that the Board approve the establishment of this program with the goals of strengthening the pool of eligible librarian candidates, retaining the librarianship workforce, and ensuring that the County Library will have sufficient professional staffing in the future.

The establishment of this program will encourage part-time temporary Public Library staff to pursue a Master's degree in Library and Information Science and become a librarian. The program will cover the student's course tuition only. Applicants must have been employed by the County Library for at least 12 continuous months prior to application date. Those who receive reimbursement and subsequently hired as a Librarian must continue employment with the County at least for one continuous year. Recipients who fail to adhere to the terms of the Program are required to pay back the entire reimbursement amount. Recipients will have a maximum of three years to complete their MLIS study.

This program has been developed in consultation with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), County Counsel and the Human Resources Department (DHR). The County Library will evaluate the program annually and complete an analysis of the long-term results of the program after five years.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

Approval of the recommended action is consistent with the County's Strategic Plan Goals in the areas of service excellence, workforce excellence, fiscal responsibility, and children and families' well-being.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The 2007-08 annual tuition costs for graduate programs in librarianship are \$9,000 - \$10,000. For the initial three years of the program, the Library will provide funds for up to three recipients to pursue their Master's degree in Information and Library Science. After the initial three years, the Department will determine if an expansion of the funding is warranted. The funding for the program will be budgeted as part of the Library's employee tuition reimbursement program and will be absorbed as part of the Department's existing budget.

FACTS AND PROVISIONAL/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Documents regarding this program, including the application form, selection process, and reimbursement agreement, will be submitted to the CEO, DHR and County Counsel for final approval.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

This program will enable the Public Library Department to enhance its recruitment efforts and expand employee development opportunities.

Respectfully submitted,



WILLIAM T FUJIOKA
Chief Executive Officer

WTF:LS
MDT:RMO

c: County Counsel
Department of Human Resources
Public Library